R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 019 922 JC 680 143

SUPERIOR TEACHING IN JUNIOR COLLEGES--RESEARCH NEEDED.

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PUB DATE 68

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.24 4P.

DESCRIPTORS- *JUNIOR COLLEGES, *INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, *INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT, *TEACHING METHODS, *EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH NEEDS, EXPERIMENTAL TEACHING,

THE ACCEPTED GOAL OF TEACHING IS TO CAUSE LEARNING, AND THE LEARNING SHOULD BE EVIDENT IN THE CHANGED BEHAVIOR OF THE STUDENT. ALTHOUGH IT IS GENERALLY ASSUMED THAT JUNIOR COLLEGES STRESS TEACHING, WHILE THE UNIVERSITY EMPHASIZES RESEARCH, INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF FEW INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH PROJECTS. GOLDEN WEST COLLEGE, IN PLANNING AN AUDIO-TUTORIAL APPROACH, DEFINED ITS OBJECTIVES IN EIGHT STEPS--THE GOALS AND THEIR HIERARCHY, THE TIME AND SEQUENCE OF EACH UNIT, THE MOST EFFICIENT METHODS OF TEACHING WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS OF BUDGET AND OTHER OBSTACLES, PREPARING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, AND COLLECTING DATA FOR EVALUATION. OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS PREPARING PROGRAMED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR USE IN ITS SYSTEMS APPROACH. OBJECTIVES AND WAYS TO EVALUATE THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE ESTABLISHED BEFORE THE COURSE IS GIVEN, THEREBY SPECIFYING GOALS FOR TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND STUDENTS. THE TYPICAL JUNIOR COLLEGE, HOWEVER, CONDUCTS LITTLE CONTROLLED RESEARCH. EFFORTS AT INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT ARE LIKELY TO (1) BE UNSYSTEMATIC, (2) BE MADE BY ADMINISTRATORS, NOT TEACHERS, (3) PROVIDE NO WAY TO MODIFY THE SYSTEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH VALID FINDINGS, (4) LACK MEASURABLE GOALS FOR STUDENTS, (5) FOCUS ON INSTRUCTOR BEHAVIOR INSTEAD OF STUDENT GAIN, (6) FOLLOWUP ONLY THE TRANSFER STUDENT, AND (7) RELY ONLY ON THE GPA FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE. THIS ARTICLE IS PUBLISHED IN "IMPROVING COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHING," VOLUME 16, NUMBER 1, WINTER 1968. (HH)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Superior Teaching in Junior Colleges: Research Needed

Junior colleges are supposed to be superior in teaching. But where is the evidence? A junior college specialist at the University of California, Los Angeles, says that research on this question is needed (B.A., Lenoir-Rhyne College; M.A., Appalachian State University; Ph.D., Florida State).

ED 019922

By JOHN E. ROUECHE

JUNIOR COLLEGES have too long rationalized: "Universities do research and junior colleges teach."[1] There is massive evidence that universities do research, but where is documented the claim that junior colleges teach? What studies have validated the junior college claim? Administrators appear content to advance the superior teaching thesis on the following rationale:

- **Junior college faculty members possess the Master's degree.[2]**
- **Junior college faculties have no interest in research.[3]**
- **Those who teach lower division courses in the university are not primarily interested in good teaching.[4]**

The inference is that if one possesses a Master's degree, has no interest in research, and is not a graduate assistant, then he must be a good teacher. That junior colleges are interested in the improvement of teaching can be supported, however. Junior colleges continue to seek membership in accrediting agencies whose prime consideration is improved instruction. Junior college administrators in California named instructional improvement as the number one priority item on their list of needs.[5]

What is meant by instructional improvement? No longer can it be assumed that learning occurs because a teacher is present in a classroom. The time has come when institutions of higher learning, and junior colleges in particular, must articulate a realistic definition of effective teaching.[6] A few junior colleges have earned the reputation of being innovative and experimental because they have ventured to define instructional effectiveness. They have stated educational objectives in measurable behavior outcomes.[7] They accept the premise that teaching causes learning, that learning can be determined by specific behavioral changes, and that teaching does not occur unless learning can be evidenced by changed student behavior.

At Western Piedmont Community College, for example, the behaviorally specified learning objectives represent the *minimal* competencies expected of any student who receives credit in a given course. In its *Manual for Course Planning* is the following statement:

> A statement of educational purpose from which nothing further will directly flow is a useless waste of time; a mere occult; academic exercise; an exercise in form. The statement of educational purpose should have *direct* translation into the identification of behaviorally specified learning objectives and in the plan for the accomplishment of the particular learning objective.[8]

Several junior colleges are utilizing a model (the Audio-Tutorial Method) developed by Dr. S. N. Postlethwaite of the Botany Department at Purdue University as a means of implementing their specified instructional objectives. The biology instructors at Golden West College planned an audio-tutorial approach in liberal arts biology courses. The system is more than lectures on tape. It is an integrated learning experience, combining the best media and method to achieve predetermined objectives. It follows these sequential steps:

1) **Defining each goal in measurable terms.**
2) **Establishing a hierarchy of goals for greatest emphasis in the course.**
3) **Determining the time to be given to each unit or goal.**
4) **Arranging units in sequence, weekly wherever possible.**
5) **Determining the best way to achieve the objective of each unit without regard to mechanics of budget, schedule, or staffing.**
6) **Assessing realistically the obstacles to established objectives, and finding ways to achieve the objectives within the limitations always inherent.**
7) **Recording tapes, writing and preparing workbooks and laboratory materials.**
8) **Securing from the dean for institutional research an identification of the kinds of data which must be assembled to assure adequate evaluation of the program from its inception.[9]**

JC 680 143

Reprinted from
IMPROVING COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHING
Winter 1968
International Quarterly Journal
Published by the Graduate School of
OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY
CORVALLIS, OREGON 97331

UNIVERSITY
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MAR 14 1968
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To implement its educational program, Oakland Community College has developed an imaginative systems approach, based on the systematic examination of tasks to be performed and comparison of alternative courses of action. It involves ways of relating ends to means so that one has a clearer notion of the choices available and better ways of measuring results against both expectations and objectives.[10] This concept includes a management model with predicted performance specifications. With the assistance of Litton Industries, Oakland is producing programed instructional materials to be utilized in its systems approach.[11] Learner implications are vast. A predesigned quality-constructed tool has been developed that has passed reliability tests and, if followed, will produce predicted results. Instructional objectives and methods for evaluating their accomplisment are established prior to the presentation of the course. Goals are specified for teacher and administrator as well as for the student.

In the three institutions cited, evaluation is an essential ingredient of the instructional process, in all cases implemented on the basis of specified instructional and curriculum objectives. An institutional research program can provide the leadership needed in this effort at college-wide evaluation. A program of institutional research can be of special assistance to faculty members in developing sound techniques for the evaluation of their instructional effectiveness.

In contrast recent investigation found that the typical junior college effort to control instructional quality and improve instruction is not based on specific research. The study emphasized that typical junior college efforts at instructional improvement may be characterized as follows:

1) **Efforts at instructional improvement are typically the results of nonsystematic planning carried out on a sporadic time schedule.**
2) **Efforts at instructional improvement are typically made by presidents and top administrative personnel rather than by instructors.**
3) **Efforts at instructional improvement typically lack goals for students as defined in measurable terms.**
4) **Efforts at instructional improvement typically include no provision to modify elements in the instructional system based on research findings.**
5) **Efforts to evaluate instructional effectiveness typically focus on instructor behavior rather than student gain following instruction.**
6) **Efforts to follow students after graduation are typically non-systematic and usually focus on the transfer student.**
7) **Efforts to measure student performance are typically confined to a single device: student grade point averages.[12]**

As part of the investigation, a model was developed for the analysis of quality control in an instructional system. This model was predicated on the premise that student expectations must be defined behaviorally and operationally.[13] This concept necessitates a program of institutional research to systematize the efforts at student evaluation. Further, the institution must be willing to modify other elements in its instructional system based on findings from the evaluation of student gains.

It is now necessary that the junior college assume a research function (at the institutional level) if it is to substantiate its claim of superior teaching. Swanson's investigation of institutional research in the junior colleges of the United States found that fewer than 20% have formally organized programs of institutional research and fewer than one-third of the colleges surveyed had plans for evaluating their research programs.[14] A Dean of Institutional Research summarized the problem succinctly:

> Unfortunately for those of us in research, educational administrators typically rely on folklore, rather than the results of substantive research in arriving at their policy decisions.[15]

Effective institutional research programs are the results of a commitment to the need for research as a prerequisite to institutional planning. The junior college president must be willing to translate his research interest into budgetary provisions for the activity.[16] The statement that institutional research in the junior college is of poor quality is indicative of the need for increased financial support and renewed emphasis to the endeavor. It was in response to the need for research dissemination that the Clearinghouse for Junior College Information was established at UCLA in June 1966.

In association with the United States Office of Education ERIC (Educational Research Information Center) project, the Clearinghouse disseminates pertinent research findings to all persons interested in junior college operations. Another Clearinghouse objective is to stimulate research in all areas relevant to junior colleges. The concept of instructional evaluation in junior colleges is an area of specific research interest at the Clearing-

house. Copies of Dr. Swanson's study may be ordered from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Copies of other documents cited in this discussion may be available by writing: Clearinghouse for Junior College Information, Powell Library, University of California, Los Angeles, California 90024.

Notes

[1] Sidney Larsen, "The Junior College Teacher and His Status," *Selected Papers From the 45th Annual Convention AAJC, 1965,* Washington, D. C. 28-33.

[2] Clyde E. Blocker, "Are Our Faculties Competent?" *Junior College Journal* 36: December, 1965, pp. 12-17.

[3] Jack D. Forbes, "Research, Teaching, and Excellence," *Junior College Journal* 37: December, 1966, pp. 7-9.

[4] Russell Lynes, "The Teacher Is An Iceberg," *Junior College Journal* 36: April, 1966, pp. 8-12.

[5] Basil H. Peterson, *Critical Problems and Needs of California Junior Colleges,* Committee on Institutional Research, California Junior College Association, June, 1965.

[6] Arthur M. Cohen, "Developing Specialists In Learning," *Junior College Journal* 37: September, 1966, pp. 21-23.

[7] John Roueche, "Experimental Programs In the Junior College," *Junior College Research Review* I-5, Clearinghouse for Junior College Information, UCLA, June, 1967.

[8] *Manual for Course Planning,* Western Piedmont Community College, Morganton, North Carolina, April, 1966, p. 8.

[9] Dudley Boyce, "Toward Innovation: The Golden West College Story," (Paper given at the Seminar on the Experimental Junior College, Palo Alto, California, 1967) Golden West College, Huntington Beach, California, 1967, p. 7.

[10] *EDP and the School Administrator,* American Association of School Administrators, Washington, D. C. 1967, p. 2.

[11] H. E. Waldorf, "The Participation of Litton Industries in the Educational Development at Oakland Community College," (Unpublished seminar paper) University of California, School of Education, Los Angeles, California, 1966, p. 5.

[12] Bruce Monroe, "Instructional Quality Control Systems," (Unpublished seminar paper), University of California, School of Education, Los Angeles, California, 1966.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Herbert Leland Swanson, "An Investigation of Institutional Research in the Junior Colleges of the United States," (Unpublished doctoral dissertation) University of California, School of Education, Los Angeles, California, 1965.

[15] Monroe, op. cit.

[16] Bill J. Priest, "On the Threshold of Greatness," *Junior College Journal* 37: September, 1966, pp. 6-8.

Improving College and University Teaching

INTERNATIONAL QUARTERLY JOURNAL
Established 1953

DELMER M. GOODE, *Editor*

Purpose:
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Volume XVI
Number 1

Graduate School
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Winter
1968

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